

In the Claims

New claims 32-37 have been added.

Underlines indicate insertions; ~~strikeouts~~ indicate deletions.

29. (Previously Presented) An article centering and severing device, comprising:

a treadle including a web guide plate and a guide strip spaced from the guide plate;

a web conveyor having a drive motor, a drive wheel, and a follower wheel configured to co-rotate with the drive wheel to move a web therebetween; and

a knock lever mechanism having a knock lever arm configured to carry at least one of the drive wheel and the follower wheel, the knock lever arm configured to engage a platen as the treadle is moved relative to the platen during a severing operation so as to move the one of the drive wheel and the follower wheel away from another of the drive wheel and the follower wheel to open up a gap therebetween and release a respective edge of the web during such severing operation.

30. (Previously Presented) The article centering and severing device of claim 29 wherein the knock lever mechanism comprises a kinematic linkage having a center pivot, wherein the lever arm is carried at one end of the kinematic linkage and a drive wheel is carried at an opposite end of the kinematic linkage.

31. (Previously Presented) The article centering and severing device of claim 29 wherein a pair of knock lever mechanisms are provided one on each edge of the treadle adjacent each respective edge of a web carried therebetween.

Please add the following new claims:

32. (New) An article centering and severing device, comprising:  
a web conveyor having a drive wheel, and a follower wheel configured to co-rotate with the drive wheel to move a web therebetween; and  
a knock lever mechanism having a knock lever arm configured to carry at least one of the drive wheel and the follower wheel, the knock lever arm configured to engage a platen as a treadle is moved relative to the platen during a severing operation,  
wherein one of the drive wheel and the follower wheel is moved away from another of the drive wheel and the follower wheel to open up a gap therebetween in order to release a respective edge of the web during the severing operation to facilitate lateral alignment of the web and articles carried by the web.

33. (New) The article centering and severing device of claim 29 wherein the knock lever mechanism comprises a kinematic linkage having a center pivot, wherein the lever arm is carried at one end of the kinematic linkage and a drive

wheel is carried at an opposite end of the kinematic linkage to enable accurate alignment of the web and the articles carried by the web.

34. (New) The article centering and severing device of claim 29 wherein a pair of knock lever mechanisms are provided one on each edge of the treadle adjacent each respective edge of a web carried therebetween.

35. (New) An article centering and severing device, comprising:  
a treadle including a web guide plate and a guide strip;  
a web conveyor having a drive wheel and a co-rotating follower wheel to move a web therebetween;  
a knock lever mechanism having a knock lever arm configured to carry at least one of the drive wheel and the follower wheel, the knock lever arm configured to engage a platen as the treadle is moved relative to the platen during a severing operation so as to open up a gap between the drive wheel and the follower wheel and release a respective edge of the web during the severing operation to ensure further centering of the web, and  
wherein the guide strip is provided in close proximity with the plate relative to article apertures in the plate to ensure alignment and positioning of the web and articles carried by the web.

36. (New) The device of claim 35, wherein the further centering of the web depends on contour features of individual punches configured to coact in

combination with shape of in-molded articles in the web to laterally further align the articles relative to each respective punch and die.

37. (New) An article centering and severing device, comprising:

- a treadle including a web guide plate and a guide strip;
- a web conveyor having a drive wheel and a co-rotating follower wheel to move a web therebetween;
- a pair of knock lever mechanisms with individual knock lever mechanisms provided on each edge of the treadle adjacent each respective edge of a web carried therebetween, the individual knock lever mechanism having a knock lever arm configured to carry at least one of the drive wheel and the follower wheel, the knock lever arm configured to engage a platen as the treadle is moved relative to the platen during a severing operation so as to release a respective edge of the web during the severing operation to ensure further centering of the web, and

wherein the guide strip is provided in close proximity with the plate relative to article apertures in the plate to ensure alignment and positioning of the web and articles carried by the web.